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XI. *Discoveries made in the Western Country, by General*
PARSONS.

Middletown in Connecticut, October 2, 1786.

S I R,

THE frequent publications I have lately seen of accounts, said to have been given by me of my discoveries in the Western Country, many of them misrepresented, and some of them totally without foundation, induces me to execute a purpose I had long since entertained, of communicating to the Society for promoting Arts and Sciences in your state, such observations as occurred to me in my journey into that country, and the discoveries there made. It appears to me of consequence, that information of facts, which may tend to throw light upon any inquiries in the natural world, should be given to some literary society, where all facts and observations, being carefully compared, our reasoning on the subject may be with more certainty ; and old principles confirmed, or new hypotheses established with more accuracy.

I left the settled parts of Pennsylvania the latter part of October last : and not to mention the large limestone springs frequently to be found in the county of Cumberland, sufficient to turn mills within a few rods of their issuing from the ground, and other curiosities I never saw before ; about the 25th of that month, I passed the Allegany mountains, in the old Pennsylvania road. The ascent of about three miles

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is gradual and easy. On the summit is a large extent of land comparatively plain. It is about eight miles from the top of the mount on the east, to the beginning of the descent on the west; whence to the level on that side is about two miles and a half. This extent contains almost all soils and descriptions of land; from the sandy pitch pine barrens and stony heath, where there is no apparent moisture; to as fine ploughland and luxuriant pasture and mowing, as I had before seen. On this mount are several mill streams, and springs of excellent water. It is observable, that the ascent of all those hills and mountains from the east, is greater than the descent on the west: and from the extensive grand view on the top of the mount, from which the country on the west and on the east is seen to a great distance, it is clearly discovered that the level of the country on the west, is vastly higher than the level on the east of the mountains. I had no instruments to determine the difference of those levels; but the fact is easily discerned by the eye. In travelling to this place, I observed the stones were pitched in the earth inclining to the horizon in angles of 30° or 40° ; very few if any lay horizontally; and in general in a direction from the N. E. to the S. W: which is a circumstance I do not remember to have found on the west of that ridge of mountains.

I arrived at Pittsburgh the 30th, three hundred and twenty miles from Philadelphia. This is a place conveniently situated for carrying on the interior commerce of that country. It stands on a point at the conjunction of the
Allegany

Alleghany river (which extends about two hundred miles N. E. from this place) and the Monongahela; which in its meanders waters a country south eastward about three hundred miles. From this point begins the river Ohio, which after running in its serpentine course, more than eleven hundred and eighty miles, and receiving in its progress many large rivers from the east, and from the west, falls into the Mississippi in about Lat. $36^{\circ} 40'$. At Bedford, on my road to this place, I was informed by Col. Wood, of many curious discoveries lately made in the West Country: among others, that, in digging a cellar at a place called *Wheeling*, ninety seven miles down the Ohio, at several feet depth in the earth, was discovered a stone wall laid in *lime*. I arrived at *Wheeling* the 3d of November, and made strict inquiry into this account; and was informed by Mr. Zanes, an intelligent, sensible man, and one of the legislature of Virginia, that in digging for a cellar, not far from that place, had been discovered a wall some feet under the earth, very regularly laid up, apparently the work of art; but he knew nothing of the circumstance related of its being cemented with *lime*. From this, on the fourth, I went to Grave Creek, twelve miles down the river. Here is a mound of earth, plainly the work of mens' hands, called an Indian grave. It is of a conical form, in height about eighty feet. It ascends in an angle of about 45° . The diameter at the top is about sixty feet, the margin enclosing a regular concave, sunk about four feet in the centre. Near the top stands an oak, about three feet in diameter. I did

not open this grave, but proceeded down the river about sixty miles to the mouth of the Muskingum : near this river are the remains of an ancient fortress ; a plan of which I find has been transmitted you by President Stiles. As this is the same I furnished him, it will be needless to attempt a more particular description of it. On the ruins of this work, has grown a white oak, now more than three feet diameter, which has an appearance of having sprung from the decays of a tree in the same place. This however, is conjectural, there not being so great evidence, as to render the fact certain.

After two days spent here, I proceeded on my journey about three hundred and eighty miles, without any extraordinary discoveries, to the great Miami. At the great Konahway and sundry other places, we found Indian graves similar to, but not as large as that at Grave Creek. Finding that the bones of a large animal had been discovered about thirty two miles from this station, curiosity led us to make search for them. Accordingly an excursion was made to the Big Bone Lick, the place where those bones were found. This place is a resort of all species of beasts in that country. A stream of brackish water runs through the land, which is a soft clay. About twenty acres are almost clear of trees, and are surrounded by higher lands. At this place were found, some on the surface, and some at a depth of four feet and more in the ground, the bones of the animal. An entire skeleton we did not find, but of different parts we brought off about four hundred pounds. A thigh bone
entire

entire measured forty nine inches in length. Parts of several jaw bones were found, but not an entire one. Some teeth were found in, and some out of the jaw, one of which I herewith send you. Part of a tusk we also had : two of the teeth I brought home ; one, the corresponding tooth of the opposite jaw, is at Yale College : the other bone we boxed and left at Pittsburgh. Of this animal the natives have no tradition, but that which is so fabulous, that no conjecture can be aided by it ; unless it be, that the animal was a carnivorous one. It is observable, that the bones of this animal are only found near salt licks, and in low soft grounds.

In my progress further down the Ohio to the Rapids, nothing occurred worth communicating to your society ; unless the petrifications at the Rapids, and in fundry other places near the river, may be an object of attention. That elementary water does not possess this quality, I suppose to be an opinion too clear, to admit of objection. The greatest quantity of petrifications, I saw, were at the falls. I was there when the waters were low, and the flat stones which extended across the river, and over which the waters generally flow, were bare, on both sides the river, as much as one fifth of a mile on each side. On the S. E. side, I observed no petrifications. On the N. W. side, they were in great plenty, of almost every kind of vegetable production ; and in every stage of the process, from their native state, to a perfect stone. Hornets' and birds' nests, nuts, roots, branches of trees, leaves, bones. &c. &c. were in great abundance,

ance. They appear at first, by accident, to be left resting on the stones ; and the water exuding from the adjoining bank, falls gently on the stones ; and glides almost imperceptibly over them, and brings with it some adhesive quality, which slightly fixes the resting body to the stone on which it lies ; and an external incrustation is first formed around the body ; whence the petrification is continued, till the whole mass becomes a perfect stone, retaining fully its original shape. It is evident, that the stone, on which these petrified vegetables are formed, is also a vegetable ; and grows up about the resting body, until in some instances the stone perfectly covers it. We were obliged in many instances to make use of picks, to break the stone or rock to a depth of several inches, to sever the petrified body from it. Whether the matter possessing this petrifying quality is known, or can be discovered, and separated from other earth, so as to become useful as a cement or otherwise, I will not pretend to assert.

In this country I was informed, that pieces of earthen ware, the common utensils of a family, are often dug out of the earth, some feet under the surface ; and at Muskingum, in digging the trenches for their pickets, a number of pieces and one entire brick, were found buried two or three feet deep. Not thinking it proper to open the mounds of earth, supposed to contain the bones of the dead, whilst the Indians were in treaty with us ; I desired the commanding officer, to open them at the Miami, after the Indians had gone ; and also left the same request at Muskingum, with an
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officer of learning, and great curiosity in his observations in the natural world : and to inform me of their discoveries ; extracts of whose letters I herewith send you. The Indians have no tradition what nation ever buried their dead in the manner we discovered them. The trees on the Indian graves and ancient fortifications (of which there are great numbers in that country) appear to be coeval with the adjoining forests. On the whole, I am of opinion, that country has been thickly peopled, by men to whom the necessary arts were known in a much greater degree than to the present native Indians of that region : but I am transgressing my own system, and shall return to facts only, and let others form hypotheses. Among the Indian nations in general, I find an appearance of a radical similitude in language ; but this is not universally true ; the Huron, or Wyandot language, having no affinity to the Shawanese, Delawares, and other nations. I do not remember to have heard a single word in that language, which had the least affinity, in sound, with the words in other languages, expressive of the same idea. A few examples follow :

	<i>Shawanese.</i>	<i>Delawares.</i>	<i>Wyandots.</i>
Bear	Mauquah	Mough	Un-yeu-ech
Water	Nip-peh	Beh	San-doo-tea
Snake	Mon-na-too	Aukook	Kun-gun-fee
Deer	Seck-thee	Au-tooh	Ske-nun-took
Nose	O-chau-fee	We-ke-un	A-yonh-joh
Eye	Ske-fa-coo	Wus-kingd	Yau-pe-dah.

Among the tribes, there are as characteristick distinctions in features, size, and complexion, as between the French, Dutch,

Dutch, English, and other European nations ; and no small difference in their manners and habits. The Shawanese are generally of a small size, rather elegant in their features, and a very cheerful and crafty people. Counselling among their old people, and dancing among their young men and women, take up a great part of their time. The *Delawares*, on the contrary, are a stout, robust people ; have little of the vivacity of the *Shawanese*, and are more grave in their manners. They all agree in a firm belief of a supreme good spirit ; and also in the existence of evil spirits ; one the author of all good, and the other the cause of all evil : and also in a state of future existence.

I could not satisfy myself that there was among them any set worship paid to the Deity : except in some nations, *once*, and in others *twice*, in a year, a national feast was provided, to which the tribe is convened ; and the chief, before they eat, makes a speech to them, in which the duties they owe to the Supreme Being, and to one another, are explained ; at the close of their repast, he exhorts them to the practice of those duties ; and the whole is ended with a solemn dance.

The customs prevailing in some of the tribes, bear an affinity to the customs prevailing among the Jews (perhaps the same, or nearly might have been practised in early times by other eastern nations.) Women in travail are removed from the residence of the family to a hut provided at a distance : when delivered, their food is carried to them, and deposited near their door, for a number of days. The particular

ticular number, I find, I have not entered in my journal. After a certain number of days are ended (during which the wife is excluded from society) she returns home with her infant ; and at the end of forty five days, is covered under the same blanket with the husband.

A woman, when her courses are upon her, maintains a silence, touches none of the family, eats by herself and retires.

Divorces are voluntary : either party puts away, and takes another mate at pleasure ; but until the husband or wife is put away, adultery is considered as a high crime. Among the *Ottoways*, it is punished, with biting off the nose of the woman. The children, on a divorce, are divided. Among some nations, if the number is uneven, the mother takes the greatest part.

If any useful inquiries can be aided by any things I have transmitted you, my intentions will be fully answered.

I am, Sir,

with great Respect,

Your obedient Servant,

SAMUEL H. PARSONS.

President WILLARD.



XII. *Barometrical Observations and Remarks, made during a Tour to Lake Champlain, by JAMES WINTHROP, Esq.*
F. A. A.

THE barometer, used in these observations, was prepared each time ; the mercury being discharged after every observation, for the convenience of transportation. As, in common barometers, the scale of inches is adjusted
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